

THE SPARK GAP

THE OFFICAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MID-STATE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

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BRING A FRIEND

February is bringing a friend to the monthly Mid-State Amateur Radio Club meeting. Our club meetings are always open to anyone that would like to attend but in February we encourage members to bring a guest to our monthly meeting. You may have a friend that does not belong to a ham radio club, or a friend that may like to know about amateur radio. This is a good opportunity to bring that friend to the MARC monthly meeting so they can meet and talk to other hams that live in the area.

So pick up the phone and offer an invitation to your friend and have them join us this Saturday morning. Coffee and donuts will be provided. See you this Saturday.

..... N9SIU

2004 Ham Radio License Classes Scheduled!!!

This year's course teaching the Technician-level Amateur Radio license examination has been scheduled. Classes will begin at the Greenwood Public Library, 310 South Meridian Street in Greenwood, on Tuesday, March 23. The course will run for nine Tuesday evenings, and each class will meet from 7:00 to 8:30 in community room A. The course is open to the general public and there are no age limitations. The course is free. A textbook, "Now You're Talking!" is optional but highly recommended and may be bought at cost from the instructor or direct from its publisher, the American Radio Relay League. The Technician license is the entry-level US Amateur Radio license class; of 700,000 licensed hams in the US, half are Technicians. The Technician license does not require a Morse Code examination, and this year's course will not include Morse Code.

Ernest Clark, KB9SKI, will teach the course on behalf of the Mid-State Amateur Radio Club. Ernest has assisted or taught the course for three years, and is also accredited to administer tests for all license classes. For more information, leave a message for Ernest at 889-1931 or email him at hamclass@midstatehams.org.

Last year's class produced at least eleven new Technicians.

SEVERE WEATHER SPOTTER CLASS

There may be snow on the ground but spring is steadily approaching. Along with spring time weather there is also the possibility of severe storms, flooding and tornadoes.

A severe weather spotter class will be offered on Monday April 12th at 7:00 PM, located at the EOC in the Johnson County Law Enforcement Center in Franklin. Talk-in will be on the 146.835 (pl 141.5) repeater.

All are encouraged to attend this valuable training even if you had it before. The National Weather Service will be conducting the training class.

Please mark this date on your calendar to attend.

..... N9SIU

You are invited to attend the Indianapolis Amateur Radio Club

March 12th , 2004 meeting. (Friday)

This meeting will be **held at** the
Indianapolis Training Center; 2801 N. Meridian Street.
(old Stouffers Hotel Bldg.)

Lost Navigation Info on 146.70 , 224.8, 442.85 & 146.67 repeaters.

Meetings **start at 7 PM** with a brief social session then a short business meeting followed by a **program** on:

"AOR HF Digital Voice systems (aor 9800 unit)"
Best technology since SSB!
presented by; Taka NAKAYAMA - KW6I from the AOR factory &
John Deegan- K9XT from Indpls.

2004 is the 90th year of one of the oldest Ham radio clubs in the United States and it promises to be a great year for Ham radio FUN in the Indianapolis area.

**Please spread the word to your ham radio friends
and bring them along.**

For more information about the IndyRadioClub visit our new Internet webpage at

www.IndyRadioClub.org <http://www.indyradioclub.org/>

ARRL to Propose New Entry-Level License, Code-Free HF Access

NEWINGTON, CT, Jan 19, 2004--The ARRL will ask the FCC to create a new entry-level Amateur Radio license that would include HF phone privileges without requiring a Morse code test. The League also will propose consolidating all current licensees into three classes, retaining the Element 1 Morse requirement--now 5 WPM--only for the highest class. The ARRL Board of Directors overwhelmingly approved the plan January 16 during its Annual Meeting in Windsor, Connecticut. The proposals--developed by the ARRL Executive Committee following a Board instruction last July--are in response to changes made in Article 25 of the international Radio Regulations at World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03). They would continue a process of streamlining the amateur licensing structure that the FCC began more than five years ago but left unfinished in the Amateur Service license restructuring Report and Order (WT 98-143) that went into effect April 15, 2000.

The ARRL has addressed frequently asked questions (FAQs) concerning this proposal.

"Change in the Amateur Radio Service in the US, especially license requirements and even more so when Morse is involved, has always been emotional," said ARRL First Vice President Joel Harrison, W5ZN, in presenting the Executive Committee's recommendations. "In fact, without a doubt, Morse is Amateur Radio's 'religious debate.'" The plan adopted by the Board departs only slightly from the Executive Committee's recommendations.

The "New" Novice

The entry-level license class--being called "Novice" for now--would require a 25-question written exam. It would offer limited HF CW/data and phone/image privileges on 80, 40, 15 and 10 meters as well as VHF and UHF privileges on 6 and 2 meters and on 222-225 and 430-450 MHz. Power output would be restricted to 100 W on 80, 40, and 15 meters and to 50 W on 10 meters and up, thus avoiding the need for the more complex RF safety questions in the Novice question pool.

"The Board sought to achieve balance in giving new Novice licensees the opportunity to sample a wider range of Amateur Radio activity than is available to current Technicians while retaining a motivation to upgrade," said ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ. "It was also seen as important to limit the scope of privileges so the exam would not have to include material that is inappropriate at the entry level."

As an introduction to Amateur Radio, the Novice license served successfully for most of its 50-year history. The FCC has not issued new Novice licenses since the 2000 license restructuring, however. Under the ARRL plan, current Novice licensees--now the smallest and least active group of radio amateurs--would be grandfathered to the new entry-level class without further testing.

Anticipating assertions that the new plan would "dumb down" Amateur Radio licensing, Harrison said those currently holding a ticket often perceive the level of complexity to have been greater when they were first licensed than it actually was. "Quite frankly," he said, "if you review the questions presented in our license manuals throughout the years, you will be surprised how they compare to those of today."

Technicians and Generals

The middle group of licensees--Technician, Tech Plus (Technician with Element 1 credit) and General--would be consolidated into a new General license that no longer would require a Morse examination. Current Technician and Tech Plus license holders automatically would gain current General class privileges without additional testing. The current Element 3 General examination would remain in place for new applicants. ARRL already has proposed additional phone privileges for Generals in its "Novice refarming" petition, RM-10413, but the FCC has not yet acted on that petition.

Morse Code Testing Retained for Extra

At the top rung, the Board indicated that it saw no compelling reason to change the Amateur Extra class license requirements. The ARRL plan calls on the FCC to combine the current Advanced and Amateur Extra class licensees into Amateur Extra, because the technical level of the exams passed by these licensees is very similar. New applicants for Extra would have to pass a 5 WPM Morse code examination, but the written exam would stay the same. The League's plan calls for current Novice, Tech Plus and General class licensees to receive lifetime Element 1 (5 WPM Morse) credit.

"This structure provides a true entry-level license with HF privileges to promote growth in the Amateur Service," Harrison said. "It also simplifies the FCC database by conforming to the current Universal Licensing System (ULS) structure and does not mandate any modifications to it."

Sumner concurred. "The Board started out by recognizing that three license classes was the right number when looking down the road 10 or 15 years," he said. "We need a new entry-level license."

"On the other hand, there's nothing particularly wrong with the existing Extra class license," he continued. "The change in the international regulations notwithstanding, the Board felt that the highest level of accomplishment in the FCC's amateur licensing structure should include basic Morse capability."

Sumner and Harrison say the current Technician entry-level ticket provides little opportunity to experience facets of ham radio beyond repeater operation. "The quality of that experience," Sumner said, "often depends on the operator's location."

Among other advantages, Sumner said the plan would allow new Novices to participate in HF SSB emergency nets on 75 and 40 meters as well as on the top 100 kHz of 15 meters. The new license also could get another name, Sumner said. "We're trying to recapture the magic of the old Novice license, but in a manner that's appropriate for the 21st century."

Proposal Includes "Novice Refarming" Band Plan

The overall proposed ARRL license restructuring plan would more smoothly integrate HF spectrum privileges across the three license classes and would incorporate the "Novice refarming" plan the League put forth nearly two years ago in a Petition for Rule Making (RM-10413). The FCC has not yet acted on the ARRL plan, which would alter the current HF subbands. The Novice refarming proposal would eliminate the 80, 40 and 15-meter Novice/Technician Plus CW subbands as such and reuse that spectrum in part to expand phone/image subbands on 80 and 40 meters.

The ARRL license restructuring design calls for no changes in privileges for Extra and General class licensees on 160, 60, 30, 20, 17 or 12 meters. Novice licensees would have no access to those bands.

For more information please go to the ARRL website at : <http://www.arrl.org>

HAMVENTION DAYTON, OHIO

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Mid-State Amateur Radio Club meets at 0800 EST the third Saturday of each month at the Johnson County Law Enforcement Center in the Emergency Operations Center. All hams are encouraged to attend this meeting and VE testing is held January through November after the meeting has ended.

MARC operates the 146.835 MHz (151.4 PL) repeater and all hams are welcome to use it.

For more information please visit our club web page at: <http://www.midstatehams.org>

